

MEDIA, PA - Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) issued the following statement on the anniversary of September 11, 2001:

“On this, the eighth anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, we remember those who lost – and gave – their lives that day. We recognize the Ground Zero rescue workers who succumbed to disease months or years later and who still suffer today. We honor our troops and our allies who have been killed or wounded in the defense of freedom. And we reaffirm our stand with those who have suffered at the hands of terror and hatred – in London, Madrid, Mumbai, and too many places around the globe.

“9/11 and its aftermath taught us many things. We witnessed extremes of human cruelty and human bravery. We learned that unmatched military force alone cannot always protect us from a determined few. And we have come to realize that as a nation we are strongest because of our principles, not in spite of them.

“Even as we recognize the sacrifices of the past, the struggle continues today. Eight years after 9/11, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al- Zawahri, and Mullah Omar have not been killed or captured. Al Qaeda is resurgent in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan and threatens the stability of both nations. Our struggle in that region is at a crossroads at the same moment we begin the dangerous process of withdrawing our forces from Iraq.”

“We must remain committed to the fight against terrorism. I was serving in the Pentagon on 9/11, and I remember in the aftermath, as we were developing strategies for winning the war on terror, how commanders were eager for ‘actionable intelligence’ on Al Qaeda. Gen. Hayden, the National Security Adviser, responded, ‘Give me some action, and I’ll give you some actionable intelligence.’ The lesson is that we must keep Al Qaeda moving, we must keep on the pressure, and we cannot let them disappear again into their havens to plot against us.

“However, the battle against Al Qaeda is one element in the war for hearts and minds across the globe. We cannot clear the field of one generation of terrorists and sow behind us the seeds of another.

"Never in our common history has the world been so united as on that terrible day in September. Rarely has the contrast been so stark not only between good and evil, but between forces of the past and the future. That day, the entire world looked to the United States for leadership in a new era. And now, eight years later, and for many years into the future, we must affirm that it is our leadership and our uncompromising commitment to our ideals -- not force alone -- that will allow freedom to triumph over fear. That is what we owe those who lost their lives on 9/11, and those who have given their lives in defense of human dignity."

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Earlier this week, to commemorate the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Congressman Sestak voted for Resolutions expressing the sense of the House of Representative regarding the terrorist attacks and recognizing September 11 as a "National Day of Service and Remembrance," H. Res. 722 and H. Res 718, respectively. In conjunction with passage of these Resolutions, Congress held a bicameral Congressional Remembrance Ceremony, allowing members of both chambers to pay their respects to the Americans who lost their lives in the attacks and the men and women who risked and, in many cases, sacrificed their own lives trying to save others.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress*